

Tom Olson inducted into Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees

Tom Olson, former Chief of Albuquerque District's Office of Counsel, was inducted into the Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees at a ceremony held at District Headquarters May 4. The event was combined with a District Open House hosted by District Engineer Lt. Col. Raymond Midkiff.

Olson retired from federal civilian service in January 1990 following a distinguished legal career of nearly 40 years. He began his career in the U.S. Army during World War II, where he was part of the Allied Forces' advance across Western Europe. Following his discharge, he earned his Bachelor of Arts and Juris Doctorate degrees from the University of Iowa.

Prior to coming to the Corps, Olson's career included positions with the Solicitor's Office, Department of Interior; the New Mexico Office of the Attorney General (First Assistant); New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (General Counsel); and private practice in Albuquerque. While employed by the Corps, Olson was able to draw upon the vast experience he gained in his previous positions to demonstrate expertise in water law, contract law, and civil litigation.

Olson's experience and reputation as an expert in the area of water law helped the Albuquerque District deal with many important and sometimes controversial issues including: *Kansas v. Colorado* litigation (U.S. Supreme Court); *Elephant Butte Irrigation District v. New Mexico State Engineer* litigation; White Sands Missile Range well permit applications; Albuquerque District reservoir operations, and compliance with interstate water compacts.

The Water Resource Development Act of 1986 brought many changes to the Corps of Engineers, including the requirement to cost-share civil works projects with local sponsors. Olson represented the Corps in negotiating Local Cooperation Agreements with several sponsors and was instrumental in the success of numerous civil works projects.

He also demonstrated his expertise in trial advocacy and civil litigation on numerous occasions. His



Photo by Derrick Johnson

Tom Olson and his wife, Rosemary, are flanked by their children and grandchildren at the ceremony.

work as the trial attorney in the contract appeal of *Rayco, Inc.* is an excellent example. This unusual case involved the termination for default of a construction contractor and the individual sureties. Following a three-week trial in Washington, D.C., the Engineer Board of Contract Appeals and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit upheld the actions taken by the Corps.

Olson's work performance and many contributions were clearly paid tribute by everyone in attendance at the ceremony. Several District retirees were in attendance including former Albuquerque District Engineer Col. Rich Leonard,

Marie Farnsworth (also a Gallery inductee), Joan Acosta, Tom Krick, Chuck DeBettignies, and John Rael. Many of Olson's family members were on hand as well, including his wife, Rosemary, and several of his children and grandchildren. o



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George Dominguez, former CPO with the Albuquerque District and a member of the Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees, receives a plaque for his lifetime of service and dedication to the Nation from District Engineer Lt. Col. Raymond Midkiff on behalf of the former Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Dr. Joseph Westfall. The ceremony, held July 30, was attended by several of Dominguez' family members and friends.